



"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

MODERN PHARISEES

One can learn much from the study of the Life and Teachings of Jesus, if he will use an Harmony of the Gospels, and in connection with it, The Desire of Ages. Inspired lessons drawn from the latter show a distinct relationship between what Christ faced in His earthly sojourn, and what we face in the times in which we live. One such comparison is who are the modern counterparts of the ancient Pharisees. We read - and note the tense of the verbs:

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now; the Pharisees do not know [present tense] their spiritual destitution. To them comes the message, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Faith and love are the gold tried in the fire. But with many the gold has become dim, and the rich treasure has been lost. The righteousness of Christ is to them as a robe unworn, a fountain untouched. To them it is said, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Desire of Ages, p. 280)

Two pertinent facts force themselves upon our consciousness in the reading of this paragraph. 1) Modern Pharisees constitute the Church of Laodicea. And 2) The warning given to the Church at Ephesus because it had left its first love, God also applies to the Church of Laodicea - He will remove its candlestick from its place among the Churches. As unwelcome as these statements are, we need to awaken from our Laodicean deception and give earnest heed.

This inspired comment is found in the chapter on "Levi-Matthew." After calling Matthew from the custom booth to follow Him, Jesus accepted an invitation to attend the feast given in His honor by Matthew in his own home. The Pharisees were aghast that Jesus would do such, and because He did, they tried to make the most of the situation to not only discredit Him with the people, but to form "wedges" between Jesus and His disciples, and John the Baptist and his disciples. But Jesus responded to the questions which the Pharisees asked. He gave three illustrations - the bridegroom and his attendants; the new patch in an old garment, and new wine in old wineskins. He left no doubt as to whom the old wineskins were - the Pharisees themselves. From these illustrations, the servant

of the Lord drew important lessons involving modern Pharisees - the Laodiceans. We can obtain a clearer perception of the truth for this day, if as we read the lessons thus drawn, we substitute for "Pharisee" the term, "Laodicea." Follow closely the principles and lessons set forth in The Desire of Ages, pp. 278-279.

Noting the teachings of John the Baptist - which the Pharisees had rejected, but now wished somehow to incorporate with their own traditions - the comment reads:

The message of John the Baptist [the Elijah Message of his day] was not to be interwoven with traditions and superstition. An attempt to blend the pretense of the Pharisees [Laodiceans] with the devotion of John would only make more evident the breach between them.

Nor could the principles of Christ's teaching be united with the form of Pharisaism [Laodiceanism]. Christ was not to close up the breach that had been made by the teachings of John. He would make more distinct the separation between the old and the new. (p. 278)

Again:

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul, could find no place for union with the religion of the Pharisees [Laodiceans], made up of ceremonies and the injunctions of men. The effort to unite the teachings of Jesus with the established religion would be in vain. The vital truth of God, like the fermenting wine, would burst the old, decaying bottles of the Pharisaical [Laodicean] tradition. (p. 279)

In the study of these illustrations, and the interpretation given in The Desire of Ages, the "new wine" does not represent "new light" but rather the fundamental faith which has been committed to the saints, but which to the Laodiceans has lost "its original significance and beauty." Observe:

The teaching of Christ, though it was represented by the new wine, was not a new doctrine, but the revelation of that which had been taught from the beginning. But to the Pharisees [Laodiceans] the truth of God had lost its original significance and beauty. To them Christ's teaching was new in almost every respect, and it was unrecognized and unacknowledged.

Jesus pointed out the power of false teaching to destroy the appreciation and desire for truth. "No man," He said, "having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better." All the truth that had been given to the world through patriarchs and prophets shone out in new beauty in the words of Christ. But the scribes and Pharisees [Laodiceans] had no desire for the precious new wine. Until emptied of the old traditions, customs, and practices, they had no place in mind and heart for the teachings of Christ. They clung to the dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God. (ibid.)

This brings us to the very heart of the issue and crisis in Laodicea. The hierarchy under siege from the forces of heresy in its midst; confronted with a liberalism which wants to set aside all that has been committed to the trust of the

Movement of 1844, seeks to maintain its supremacy by professing to adhere to orthodoxy, but at the same time rejecting in vital areas of doctrine the historic position of the Church. It was the historic revelation "of that which had been taught from the beginning" which constituted the teachings of Jesus in which the Pharisees of His day saw no light. To the modern Pharisees - the Laodiceans - the historic position committed to the Movement contains no light. The hierarchy wants it compromised, mitigated, and in its place a more palatable system of doctrines by which they may fraternize more freely with the fallen church, which the Scripture in prophecy calls, Babylon. We need to remember:

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. (Life Sketches, p. 196)

Solzhenitsyn in his book - The Gulag Archipelago - has an interesting comment relative to those who wish to forget the past. He writes that the same hands which once screwed tight his handcuffs now hold out their palms in reconciliation: "No don't! Don't dig up the past! Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye." To this Solzhenitsyn aptly comments -

But the proverb goes on to say: "Forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." (p. x.)

Is this why, the True Witness says to the leadership of Laodicea - Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"? (Rev. 3:17) Would that same Witness say today as He said yesterday - "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33) We pretend to garnish "the tombs of the prophets" but refuse to learn the lessons of 1844, 1888, or 1955-57 (Barnhouse-Martin dialogues). The case of the modern Pharisee is as hopeless as that of the ancient Pharisee.

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A MISAPPLIED PRINCIPLE

The Full Gospel Business Men's International, a charismatic interdenominational organization, hold their meetings on platforms over which they have hung a pennant with the message - "HIS BANNER OVER US IS LOVE." Dr Billy Graham tells us that - "In these last days the Holy Spirit is doing a new thing among the people of God. He is regrouping His people." What does he mean by "regrouping"? Graham answers the question - "He is regrouping it not by definition of our doctrine but by the way we live together and love one another." (Decision, Nov., 1974, Quoted in Faith for the Family, March, 1979, p. 4) Roman Catholic Bishop Leo T. Maher of San Diego told an ecumenical service at a First Methodist Church - "We must find a way of presenting the gospel in vital challenging terms. . . Love is the driving force behind all our efforts toward unity. . . Love makes us more perceptive." (ibid.) Pope John Paul II in meeting with the Bishops of New Zealand in his private library stressed that they must help lead the Church to draw closer to their "separated brethren" and that this work be carried out with "much understanding, with much patience, and with great love." (RNS, Nov. 14, 1978, p. 11)

On the surface, it would appear that the Charismatics, the Apostate Protestants, the Roman Catholics, and the Ecumenists have found the long lost key from the Scriptures by which to solve and heal the schisms in the religious world. This would not be so deceptive to the Seventh-day Adventist were it not for the fact that the hierarchy use the same approach to maintain their position of authority. "Now you must love the brethren; it is not true Christian charity to criticize or in any way point out their deviations from truth," so runs the propaganda releases to the laity. It was Luther who in replying to a friend centuries ago, said - "Cursed be that love and unity for whose sake the Word of God must be put at stake." (Quoted in Faith for the Family, op. cit.)

We may point with smug complacency to what the Beloved John has written, reminding ourselves that he is often spoken of as the Apostle of Love. He did write emphatically - "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (I John 4:7-8) But this same loving John wrote equally as emphatic concerning our relationship to those who would pervert the truth. He counselled:

Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we loose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that bid-deth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (II John 7-11)

Commenting on those who would mitigate this forthright admonition from the pen of John, the beloved, Alford in his Greek New Testament wrote:

This command has been by some laid to the fiery and zealous spirit of St. John, and it has been said that a true Christian spirit of love teaches us otherwise. But as rightly understood, we see that this is not so. Nor are we at liberty to set aside direct ethical injunctions of the Lord's Apostles in this manner. Varieties of individual character may play on the surface of their writings: but in these solemn commands which come up from the depths, we must recognize the power of that One Spirit of Truth which moved them all as one. It would have been infinitely better for the Church now, if this command had been observed in all ages by her faithful sons. (Vol. IV, p. 521)

This brings us face to face with what really constitutes love as it relates to truth. When pressed sore by the "archers" who would have me tone down the messages of the thought paper, telling me that I should have more "love" for those of whom I write who have perverted the truth, I turn for refuge and increased faith to the following inspired paragraphs:

Today there is need of the voice of stern rebuke; for grievous sins have separated the people from God. Infidelity is fast becoming

fashionable. "We will not have this man to reign over us," is the language of thousands. The smooth sermons so often preached make no lasting impression; the trumpet does not give a certain sound. Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God's word.

There are many professed Christians who, if they should express their real feelings, would say, What need is there of speaking so plainly? They might as well ask, Why need John the Baptist have said to the Pharisees, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Why need he have provoked the anger of Herodias by telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother's wife? The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking. Why could he not have moved along without incurring the displeasure of those who were living in sin?

So men who should be standing as faithful guardians of God's law have argued, till policy has taken the place of faithfulness, and sin is allowed to go unreprieved. When will the voice of faithful rebuke be heard once more in the church?

"Thou art the man." Words as unmistakably plain as these spoken by Nathan to David are seldom heard in the pulpits of to-day, seldom seen in the public press. If they were not so rare, we should see more of the power of God revealed among men. The Lord's messengers should not complain that their efforts are without fruit, until they repent of their love of approbation, and their desire to please men, which leads them to suppress truth.

Those ministers who are men-pleasers, who cry, Peace, peace, when God has not spoken peace, might well humble their hearts before God, asking pardon for their insincerity and their lack of moral courage. It is not from love for their neighbor that they smooth down the message entrusted to them, but because they are self-indulgent and ease-loving. True love seek first the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

Those who have this love will not evade the truth to save themselves from the unpleasant results of plain speaking. When souls are in peril, God's ministers will not consider self, but will speak the word given them to speak, refusing to excuse or palliate evil.

Would that every minister might realize the sacredness of his office and the holiness of his work, and show the courage that Elijah showed! As divinely appointed messengers, ministers are in a position of awful responsibility. They are to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering." In Christ's stead they are to labor as stewards of the mysteries of heaven, encouraging the obedient and warning the disobedient. With them worldly policy is to have no weight. Never are they to swerve from the path in which Jesus has bidden them walk. They are to go forward in faith, remembering that they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. They are not to speak their own words, but words which One greater than the potentates of earth has bidden them speak. Their message is to be, "Thus saith the Lord." God calls for men like Elijah,

Nathan, and John the Baptist, - men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have.

God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. It is to such as these that He will speak the word: "Well done, good and faithful servant;. . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Prophets and Kings, pp. 140-142)

When we think of the primitive faith and godliness which marked the early church - and which must mark the closing work of God in the earth - we are reminded that they had a love which could not bear "them which are evil," and "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. 2:2) The Apostle Paul was vehement that "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye received, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:9) Love for truth predominated over love for person who under the spirit of the devil was preaching error. Souls were endangered, and neither Paul, nor John considered themselves but boldly called those who would pervert the truth by their right names. Dare we do less today?

It was when the early church lost that first love, that the Lord of the Church had to censure them, and call to their attention that they were in a fallen condition and need to repent, lest He would come and remove their candlestick from its place. (Rev. 2:5) What we fail to realize all too often is that truth gives to love its purity and real effectiveness as contrasted to that love-sick sentimentalism which pampers heresy, and deviation from the firm platform. We are told:

Truth is sacred, divine. It is stronger and more powerful than anything else in the formation of a character after the likeness of Christ. In it there is fulness of joy. When it is cherished in the heart the love of Christ is preferred to the love of any human being. This is Christianity. This is the love of God in the soul. Thus pure, unadulterated truth occupies the citidel of the being. (IHP, p. 140)

Not only did the beloved John write concerning heresies and heretics, and how those who really have true love are to relate to them, but he also wrote what should be our attitude toward those who seek to exert an hierarchical spirit within the body of Christ. John declared:

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. (III John 9-10)

We may preach righteousness by faith all we wish, but unless we realize that not only is there the theological side, but also a practical side to the question, we are only as a cake half baked, and thus serving to the people undigestible

food. Not only does the righteousness of Christ produce men and women in whom the love for and of Christ is perfected in truth, but also a group of people who know what their Lord meant when He said - "All ye are brethren." (Matt. 23: 8) Those who can sing - "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts together in Christian love and fellowship" - are those who are bound together by the Third Angel with the cords of truth (EW, p. 88), and not by those who as Diotrephes of John's day loveth to have preeminence among the believers, and throw out of the fellowship and maliciously castigate those who seek to uphold the truth against heretics.

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WORTH THINKING ABOUT

While on a recent itinerary North and East, I had occasion to call a doctor and his wife who lived near where I was to speak. In the course of the conversation, this faithful and concerned sister called my attention to a statement she read a few days previous. She said that when she read it, she thought about the work of the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, and the thrust of the monthly thought paper, "Watchman, What of the Night?" She was unable to locate at the moment the exact source, and so I asked that she drop me a card with the book and page so that I could share the same with all the readers of the thought paper. Here it is:

To substitute external forms of religion for holiness of heart and life, is still as pleasing to the unrenewed nature as it was in the days of these Jewish teachers [in the Church of Galacia]. Today, as then, there are false spiritual guides, to whose doctrines many listen eagerly. It is Satan's studied effort to divert minds from the hope of salvation through faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God. In every age the arch-enemy adapts his temptations to the prejudices or inclinations of those whom he is seeking to deceive. In apostolic times he led the Jews to exalt the ceremonial law, and reject Christ; at the present time he induces many professing Christians, under pretense of honoring Christ, to cast contempt on the moral law, and to teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity. It is the duty of every servant of God to withstand firmly and decidedly these perverters of the faith, and by the word of truth fearlessly to expose their errors. (Acts of the Apostles, p. 387)

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QUOTABLE QUOTES

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32)

Truth never brings the soul into bondage. It is the turning from truth to error that brings the soul into captivity. The one who is bound up in close relationship with Christ is freed from the slavery of sin. (Signs, Aug. 22, 1900)

IF BACCHIOCCHI COULD TALK TO ELLEN G. WHITE?

In a letter dated, January 25, 1978, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi wrote to a layperson who challenged some of the positions in his book - From Sabbath to Sunday - which were contradictory to what had been written in the Spirit of Prophecy. Bacchiocchi suggested that if he could talk to Ellen G. White he would be able to change her mind in regard to certain statements made in The Great Controversy. Here are his own words over his own signature:

I have a great respect for Mrs White but I feel hurt everytime I see people who in good conscience abuse her. Mrs White for instance has repeatedly claimed that she was not an authority on historical questions, as you can read in the last issue of the Review [January 19, 1978] in the article by Arthur White.¹ Yet some take her statements where she says in GC that in the earliest centuries all Christians observed the Sabbath and that Pope Sylvester first made Sunday Lord's Day at the time of Constantine (GC. 52-53 and Spirit of Prophecy [IV] p. 55) as infallible statements.² May I ask you what is to be done when you read document after document in early Christianity telling us for instance that most Christians already in the second century observed Sunday and that Sunday had already become by the latter part of the second century "Lord's Day"? How can you reconcile the differences? Do we have to charge all the documents available of being forged, falsified in order to cover up Mrs White? I for myself do not want to be part of any cover up deal, because I believe that truth must be empirically proven, whenever it is possible to do so. I am sure that if I had a chance to speak to Mrs White today and present her all the data made available by recent research, she would be most willing and happy to revise and correct all the historical inaccuracies in Great Controversy. We all know how pleased she was to get the help of "experienced workers" to revise the book before her death.

¹The article referred to from the pen of Dr. Arthur White, formerly the Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., was one of a series of four on the over-all subject - "Toward an Adventist concept of inspiration" - beginning in the January 12, 1978 issue. Among the liberal intelligensia within the ranks of the Church there has been an increasing demand for clarification of what they consider historical inaccuracies in the book - The Great Controversy. The matter of "borrowing" from historians has also been introduced. One former professor of history at Andrews University who is now serving as President of Southwestern Union College at Keene, TX., has written a manuscript, as yet unpublished, entitled - "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians: The Evidence from an Unpublished Manuscript [autograph] on John Huss." This manuscript by Dr. McAdams, whether with conscious intent or not, puts the finger on Elder Willie White and the literary assistants for the "damage" done. The influence of Willie White on his mother, especially during her declining years, and the emphasis in her writings at that period which have been used to build up the power of the hierarchy has not been fully documented or exposed.

Those sections of her writings which downgrade the subserviance to ecclesiastical edicts have been in instances suppressed. (This will be noted in the next thought paper in the discussion of a critical manuscript, which has been released only in part.)

²A careful reading of the references cited by Bacchiocchi do not confirm his conclusions. He infers that she stated without qualification that "all Christians" in the earliest centuries observed only the Sabbath day. On page 52 of The Great Controversy is found this sentence - "In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians." However, in the same paragraph is found this qualifying statement - "That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed." This conforms to literature found even in the 5th Century regarding the observance of the Sabbath. Socrates Scholasticus in his Ecclesiastical History (bk 5, chap. 22) stated: "Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do so." (Quoted in SDA Bible Student's Source Book, 1962 edition, p. 881)

The other statement with which Bacchiocchi takes exception is that "Pope Sylvester first made Sunday Lord's Day at the time of Constantine." However, by reading Spirit of Prophecy IV, p. 55, the sentence in question reads simply: "A few years after the issue of Constantine's decree, the bishop of Rome [No name stated] conferred on the Sunday the title of Lord's day." To have "made" is one thing, to confer by ecclesiastical decree thus confirming what the Pagans had called Sunday for centuries is another thing. If Bacchiocchi was as "sloppy" in the analysis of the material he used in his book - From Sabbath to Sunday - as he was in this analysis of the Spirit of Prophecy, the whole book stands in question.

One needs to keep in mind that the book - From Sabbath to Sunday - is not published by any press of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but rather by The Pontifical Gregorian University Press in Rome. In a brochure advertising this book, Bacchiocchi states:

I thought you might appreciate learning about the availability of my study From Sabbath to Sunday, recently published (with the imprimatur [of the Jesuits]) by the Pontifical Gregorian Press, in Rome, Italy. In less than a year the book has been reprinted four times for a total of over 40,000 copies. I am taking the liberty of informing you about this personally, inasmuch as the publisher has no outlet in this country to promote and distribute its publications.

Yet this book is now appearing in the libraries of Adventist churches, and promoted at Church convocations, without an accompanying explanation that if read uncritically it may be dangerous to one's spiritual health and faith.

IF ELLEN G. WHITE COULD TALK TO DR SAMUELE BACCHIOCCHI?

A Review of Bacchiocchi's book - From Sabbath to Sunday - by W. A. Jurgens in The Catholic Historical Review, states: - "The scholarship of From Sabbath to Sunday is not just impeccable, it is truly a marvel. No patristic stone has been left unturned." The term - "patristic" - means "relating to the church fathers and their writings." To another minister - Elder W. L. H. Baker - who at the turn of the century was also reading the Church Fathers but on a different subject, Sr. White wrote:

"The popular opinion of what saith the Fathers will not help my case. My work is given me of God to know and understand His will for my own individual self. By thoughtful, prayerful study, I must seek to know for myself the true meaning of the Scriptures. We should thank God every day that we are not left to human traditions and man made assertions. We cannot be safe in trusting to any other word except "It is written." We cannot float with the current; we cannot build our faith on any human theory, lest we come under condemnation as did the Jews. "Ye teach for doctrine the commandments of men," said Christ to them. And this statement is made decidedly plain to us in these last days.

In Sunday observance the commandments of men are made supreme. Human authority and church pretensions are made as the word of God, to which all must bow. Should we do this, we would be laborers together with the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who exalted himself above God and all that is written in the word of God.
Letter 8, 1895

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XII - 7 (July, 1979)

SILVER LAKE II -- From July 25 - 29, there will be another series of meetings dedicated to the study of God's word as it relates to present duty. Those who enjoyed the fellowship last year will not want to miss a single meeting this year. Others who have heard the tapes will also want to be present if possible. For further information either write or call Kirby Clendenon DDS, 371 S Roop St, Carson City, NV 89701, (702) 882-0680, or Pastor Jon Vannoy P. O. Box 2271, Carson City.

JULY CONVOCATION - On campus here, July 7. Sabbath School, Worship, and the celebration of the Ordiances will mark the activities of the day. (The August Convocation will perhaps need to be adjusted due to the Silver Lake, California, meeting. So before you finalize on your plans for the August meeting, call ahead and check. (501) 292-3288.

OVERSEAS AIRMAIL SERVICE - To those who are regular contributors to the work of the Foundation (Tithes and/or Offerings), we are mailing the monthly thought paper to them by airmail. If others are interested in receiving the thought paper by air overseas, write to us for details of cost.

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